



Place: Bloomfield Town Hall
800 Bloomfield Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Meeting Notes

Date: May 15, 2019

Notes Taken by: Nicolas Bosonetto

Project #: 42466.00

Re: Public Information Meeting #2
Bloomfield Complete Streets Master Plan

The second Public Information Meeting took place on Wednesday, May 15, 2019 from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Bloomfield Town Hall council chambers. Twenty-seven members of the public attended in addition to three members of the consultant team, two Town Councilors, and members of the Town's DPW, Police, and Planning Department. The meeting consisted of a two-part presentation. The first part discussed elements of a Complete Streets Policy and the second part discussed the six priority corridors and proposed improvements.

Complete Streets Policy:

Eric Weis, AICP presented an informative look into the 10 ideal Complete Street Policy elements as suggested by [Smart Growth America](#):

1. Vision and intent: Includes an equitable vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets. Specifies need to create complete, connected, network and specifies at least four modes, two of which must be biking or walking.
2. Diverse users: Benefits all users equitably, particularly vulnerable users and the most underinvested and underserved communities.
3. Commitment in all projects and phases: Applies to new, retrofit/reconstruction, maintenance, and ongoing projects.
4. Clear, accountable expectations: Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval and public notice prior to exceptions being granted.
5. Jurisdiction: Requires interagency coordination between government departments and partner agencies on Complete Streets.
6. Design: Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines and sets a time frame for their implementation.
7. Land use and context sensitivity: Considers the surrounding community's current and expected land use and transportation needs.
8. Performance measures: Establishes performance standards that are specific, equitable, and available to the public.
9. Project selection criteria: Provides specific criteria to encourage funding prioritization for Complete Streets implementation.
10. Implementation steps: Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy.

During the discussion the following questions and comments were made by the group in regard to policy:

- ConnDOT Jurisdiction – Since most of the arterial and some of the major collector roadways in Town are under the jurisdiction of the state, people wanted to know how a local policy would influence these

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roadways. Mark Jewell from VHB explained that ConnDOT has adopted a [statewide Complete Streets policy](#) and is generally open to more pedestrian and cycling amenities on state roadways. The policy includes support for 11-foot travel lanes. Jose Giner, Director of Planning & Economic Development, commented that the Town of Bloomfield received a \$266,000 grant from ConnDOT's Community Connective Program to install sidewalks on Tunxis Avenue. Also, CRCOG is in the process of developing a region-wide Complete Street Policy.

- Enforcement – Many residents had questions regarding speeding on local roadways and how a local policy would be enforced. Bloomfield Police Officer Nicole Downs explained that the BPD can enforce both state laws and local ordinances on both local and state roadways. Officer Downs also explained that the speed limits are based on the design of the roadways and that the BPD has monthly public safety meetings where crashes and dangerous roadways are discussed. Mr. Giner also explained that stop signs cannot be installed unless they meet specific warrants including volume of vehicles and crashes, and noted that the method to decrease speeds on a roadway is to change the design. Mr. Jewell also commented that there are more immediate methods that can be used, including repainting the roadway to decrease lane widths to 11-feet.
- Crashes – A member of the public inquired about the high-crash areas as shown in the maps and asked why other areas were not included. Mr. Bosonetto explained that crashes for a three-year period were collected and analyzed, and while there were crashes throughout Town, certain intersections were considered high-crash clusters because they had more crashes than average. For example the intersection of Blue Hills Avenue and Cottage Grove Road had 31 crashes making it the highest crash area in Town. It was also noted that there had been three pedestrian fatalities on Blue Hills Avenue between Cottage Grove and Park Avenue in the past 10 years.
- Signage – A member of the public commented on the lack of and inadequacy of signage on some roads. Mr. Bosonetto noted that signs are frequently stolen or knocked down, specially during winter plowing. Signage is a maintenance issue that should be addressed in the policy.

Priority Corridors:

The second part of the presentation discussed the process by which priority corridors were identified, ranked, and prioritized. The first public information meeting allowed members of the public to identify which roadways needed improvement to create a safe and connected pedestrian, cycling, and transit network in town. A total of 18 corridors were identified and comments provided regarding their deficiencies. At the first stakeholder meeting the corridors were ranked according to public input, and these rankings were combined with quantitative analysis of crash rates and traffic volumes. The list of corridors was reviewed by Town officials to arrive at the final prioritization list. Mr. Bosonetto explained that the corridor prioritization was a living document that should be updated periodically by the Town as projects are finished and new areas of improvement are included. A handout was distributed including a map depicting the 18 ranked corridors and a spreadsheet with each corridor's attributes.

Another handout from the [FHWA's Bikeway Selection Guide](#) was distributed. The chart clearly showed that there are three different types of bikeways: shared lane (sharrows), bike lanes, and separated or shared use paths. Shared lanes are only appropriate for low volume (less than 3,000 vehicles/day) and low speed roads (less than 25 MPH). Bike lanes are appropriate at volumes less than 6,500 veh/day and speed below 30 MPH. On roadways with volumes greater than 6,500 veh/day and speeds greater than 30 MPH, separated facilities including shared use paths are appropriate for safety reasons, specially if vulnerable users are expected to use the facility. It should be noted that experienced cyclists are always allowed to cycle on the roadway as long as it is not a access-limited facility (highways and interstates).

The presentation focused on the top six corridors and the recommended Complete Street treatments based on available right-of-way, traffic volumes, and existing infrastructure. The following recommendations were made:

1. Park Avenue from Blue Hills Avenue to Town Center
Recommendations for Park Avenue included education of the school children on safe walking and cycling behaviors. A 10 to 14-foot shared use path along the north side of the roadway is recommended due to the high volume and speed of vehicles (10,800 veh/hour at 35 MPH) and the presence of school children. There are three schools, sports fields, and the leisure department located on the north side, while the south side of the street has a line of utility poles that would prevent installation of additional cycling facilities. The roadway is under ConnDOT jurisdiction but has a 66-foot right-of-way.
2. Cottage Grove Road from town line to Cigna
Recommendations for Cottage Grove Road included improved signalization to reduce congestion at the intersection with Blue Hills Avenue and improved crosswalks and pedestrian signals at all signalized intersections. Due to the high volume and speed of traffic (27,300 veh/day at 40 MPH) separated facilities and controlled crosswalks are recommended. The roadway is under ConnDOT jurisdiction and has a wide right-of-way ranging from 120 to 150-feet. There is a low-volume, low-speed frontage road along the north side from Walsh Street to Savin Road that could be used for on-street cycling if appropriate crossings were built. Due to the difficulty of crossing Cottage Grove Road, separated shared-use paths of 10-foot width are recommended on both sides. Transit stops should also be accommodated using the 8-foot shoulders.
3. Packard Street Neighborhood
The Packard Street neighborhood is bounded by Packard Street, Cottage Grove Road, Blue Hills Avenue, and Ledyard Avenue. All the streets within the neighborhood are local roadways, but experience above average traffic volumes and accident rates due to the amount of traffic cutting through to avoid the congested intersection of Blue Hills Avenue and Cottage Grove Road. Recommendations included conducting a traffic study and a Road Safety Audit (RSA) of the neighborhood and Blue Hills Avenue/Cottage Grove Road. Until the intersection congestion issues could be addressed, continued

enforcement of traffic regulations should be conducted. Alternative traffic calming measures including traffic circles and median islands could be evaluated by the Town. It should be noted that these traffic calming measures should take into account emergency vehicles, snow plowing, and truck deliveries and any proposed solution should be coordinated with Bloomfield Police, Fire and DPW departments. Officer Downs from the public regarding the lack of sight-lines on Joyce Street and the need for four-way stop signs.

4. Bloomfield Avenue from Jerome Way to Geissler's Supermarket

Bloomfield Avenue is a ConnDOT roadway through the Town Center. An RSA was conducted in 2017 that recommended the construction of two roundabouts on Bloomfield Avenue at the intersections with Park Avenue (Route 178) and Wintonbury Avenue. Mr. Giner commented that the project has been funded by ConnDOT and the design has just started. He further encouraged the public to attend the 30% Design Public Hearing to advocate for pedestrian and cycling improvements. Mr. Giner also reported that a ConnDOT grant funding for sidewalks to connect Filley Park to Geisler's Supermarket had been secured by the Town. The improvements under way closely support the recommendations that the corridor have sidewalks and separated bike facilities.

5. Blue Hills Avenue from town line to Cottage Grove Road

The Blue Hills Avenue corridor from the Hartford town line to Cottage Grove Road is a four lane roadway with 16,300 veh/day and no crosswalks or traffic signals. Mr. Bosonetto explained that uncontrolled crosswalks on a 4-lane arterial roadway are very dangerous due to the 'courtesy crash' – which happens when vehicles in the lane closest to the sidewalk stop to allow a pedestrian to cross but vehicles in the second lane do not stop and hit the pedestrian at high speed. Mr. Bosonetto further explained that a two-lane roadway with a Two-Way-Left-Turn-Lane (TWLTL) can adequately handle the traffic volumes and also provide for pedestrian crosswalks and refuge islands. The recommended road-diet would also allow for bicycle lanes to be added.

6. Blue Hills Avenue from Cottage Grove Road to Day Hill Road (three sections)

The section of Blue Hills Avenue from Cottage Grove Road to Park Avenue is a four-lane roadway with 15,600 veh/day and a 30 MPH speed limit. This corridor has two signalized intersections at Walsh Street and Park Avenue, but also has two uncontrolled crosswalks at Rockwell Avenue and Ledyard Avenue. There have been a reported three pedestrian fatalities in the last 10 years. Mr. Bosonetto again described the dangers of uncontrolled crosswalks at 4-lane arterials, and recommended narrowing the travel lanes to 11-feet and adding pedestrian refuge islands, rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs), and lighting at the crosswalks. The RRFBs should be installed on both sides of the roadway and the refuge island and typically have between 60% and 95% stop compliance rates. As previously mentioned in the Packard Street corridor, and RSA and traffic study should be conducted for this corridor.

The second section of this corridor extends from Park Avenue to Dudley Town Road, and is a one-lane roadway with a more rural character. The roadway is under ConnDOT jurisdiction and has wide 8-foot shoulders. For this section of roadway it is recommended that sidewalks along both sides be constructed up to Wintonbury Road, and that crosswalks and pedestrian signals be added to the intersection. From Wintonbury Road to Dudley Town Road a sidewalk along one side at a minimum is recommended.

The third section of this corridor extends from Dudley Town Road to Day Hill Road and is a four-lane section serving the many industrial complexes. The road is a ConnDOT arterial with a 130-foot right-of-way. There are six signalized intersections that should include crosswalks and pedestrian signals. Sidewalks should be included on both sides of the roadway. Cyclists could use the sidewalks due to the low volumes of expected riders.

After the presentation there were questions from the public asking if there are any lower-cost, short-term solutions that do not require infrastructure improvements as detailed in the recommendations. It was explained that short term solutions, including re-striping narrower lanes and signage improvements would be done as part of routine maintenance and repaving work. This changes would be outlined in the Complete Streets Policy and implemented by the DPW as part of routine maintenance work.

Another person commented that connections to abutting towns should be prioritized. The consultant team explained that the Blue Hills Corridor and Cottage Grove Road improvements are meant to connect to Hartford and Windsor, and that the East Coast Greenway is a vital regional connection that is being developed and supported by this plan.

Statement of Accuracy:

- We believe these minutes accurately describe the discussion and determinations of this meeting. Unless notified to the contrary within 5 business days, we will assume all in attendance concur with the accuracy of these notes.